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The President's Daily Brief

July 24, 1976

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July 24, 1976

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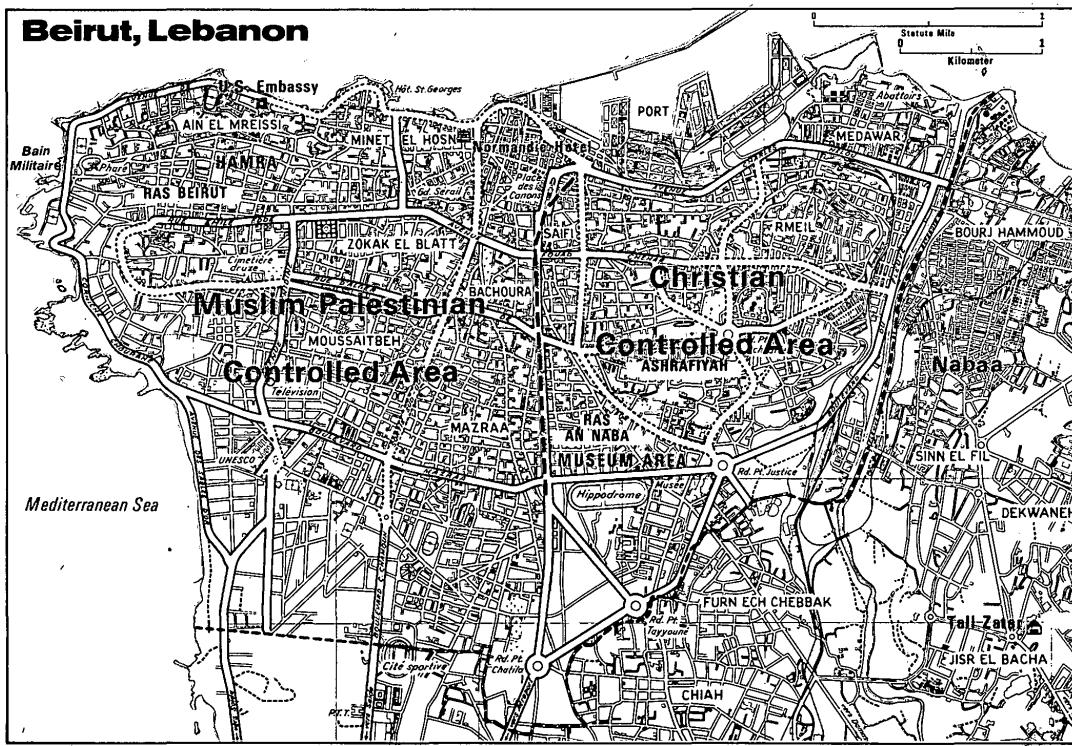
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LEBANON: Syrian Deputy Prime Minister Haydar told US officials on Thursday that he was optimistic about the talks now underway in Damascus between Palestinians and Syrians, but he felt it would take several weeks to make any headway.

Haydar admitted that President Asad's warning to the Palestinians in his speech on Tuesday had complicated matters. Syria, he said, could not move from the position Asad had staked out in the speech.

George Habbash and other leaders of the fedayeen rejectionists announced yesterday that they will not be bound by any agreements reached in Damascus. Their warning follows a statement by Lebanese leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt that he would not treat with the Syrians.

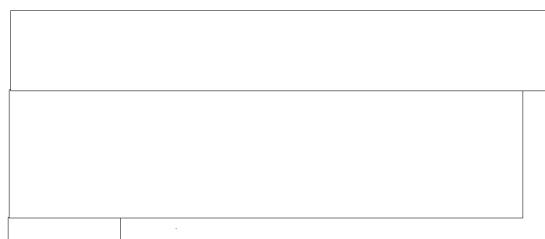
Arab League representatives in Beirut are trying to arrange an expansion of the newly created buffer zone at the main cross-over point between the Christian and Muslim sectors of the city.

A Sudanese contingent previously based in Sidon reportedly is moving to Beirut, and additional Saudi troops are being sent from Damascus to Beirut. These units presumably will supplement the Saudi contingent already in place and will provide enough troops to extend the buffer zone further north along the main axis that divides the city.

The Christians have publicly agreed to let Arab League troops establish posts on their side of the buffer zone, but apparently they are being cooperative only for the purpose of disguising preparations for further military moves.

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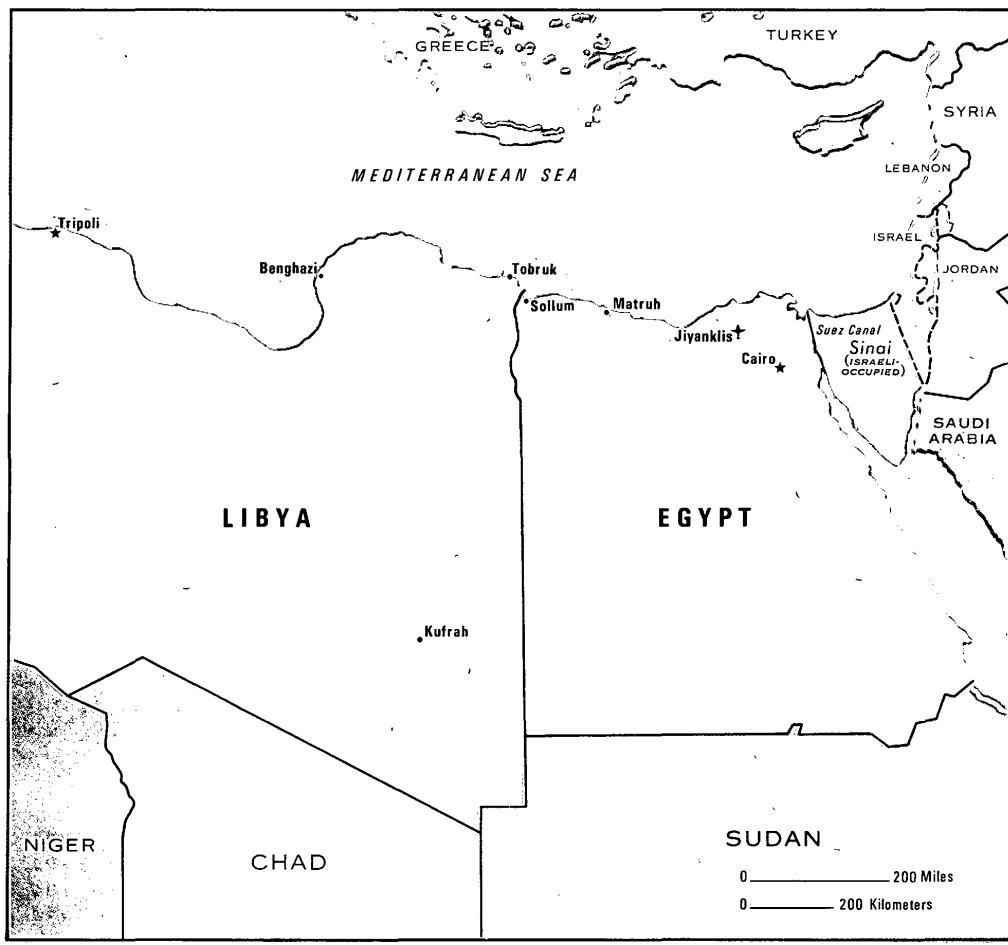
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In the north--off the coast near Chekka--the Christians intercepted and seized a boat from Beirut carrying arms to Palestinian fighters in the Tripoli area. A ship of Greek registry that presumably was also carrying arms to the Palestinians sank earlier this week in the harbor at Tyre--the southern coastal point for arms delivery to the Palestinians--as the result of an explosion in its hull.

EGYPT-LIBYA: Propaganda attacks by both Egypt and Libya have risen to a new and more threatening pitch in the last few days. During a speech Thursday, President Sadat added a note of official sanction by implying that Egypt could no longer tolerate President Qadhafi.

Referring to Qadhafi as "the maniac of Libya," Sadat said repeatedly that Egypt would not stand for Libya's "international gangsterism." He noted that Cairo is fully aware of Tripoli's subversive activities.

Libya's official news agency responded yesterday with a denunciation of Sadat as a "Caesar" who should not remain in office.

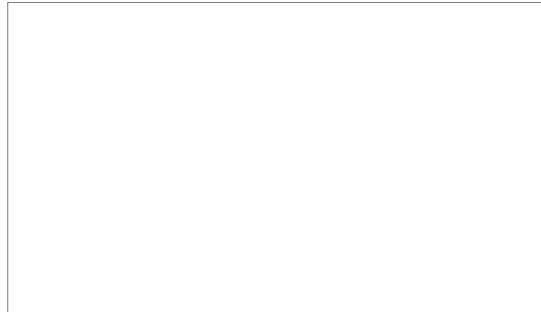
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Egyptian forces do not appear to be in position for a large-scale operation, although the necessary deployments could probably be carried out in a few days.

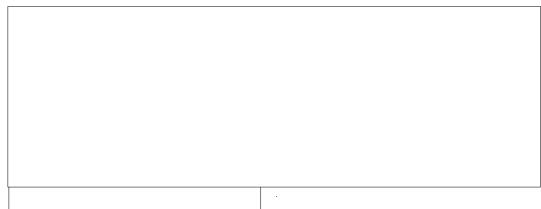
Recent Egyptian movements suggest that Cairo is beginning to position some forces so that they could either support an attack into northeastern Libya or be prepared to put up a strong defense

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against Libyan forces now in the Tobruk area. Cairo may also have nothing more in mind than the ir
timidation of Libya.



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KENYA-UGANDA-UK: A high-level Kenyan official told the US ambassador this week that current US air and sea visits have played a significant role in deterring Ugandan President Amin from military action against Kenya.

Neither government appears to have undertaken any new troop movements in the past week or so. Ugandan units near the border remain on alert. Kenyan troops are still some distance from the border, apparently in a more relaxed state of alert.

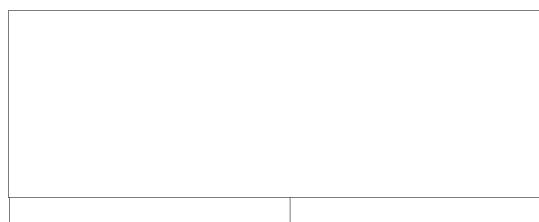
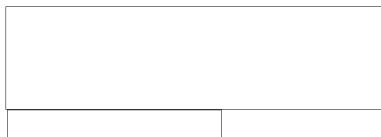
Ugandan President Amin so far seems to be keeping his public pledge to President Kenyatta to halt anti-Kenyan propaganda and is now concentrating on the UK. According to Radio Uganda, Amin plans to confront the new British acting high commissioner with charges that London is engaging in "malicious propaganda" against Kampala.

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Amin has not yet carried out reported threats to arrest the British high commissioner and other Britons in Uganda. He apparently believes such a move would force London to press Kenya to end its economic restrictions.

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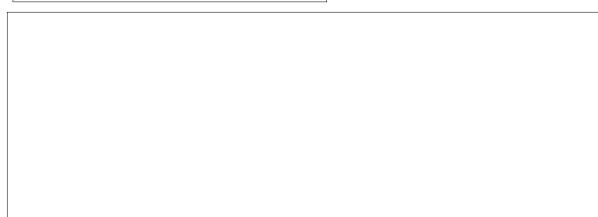
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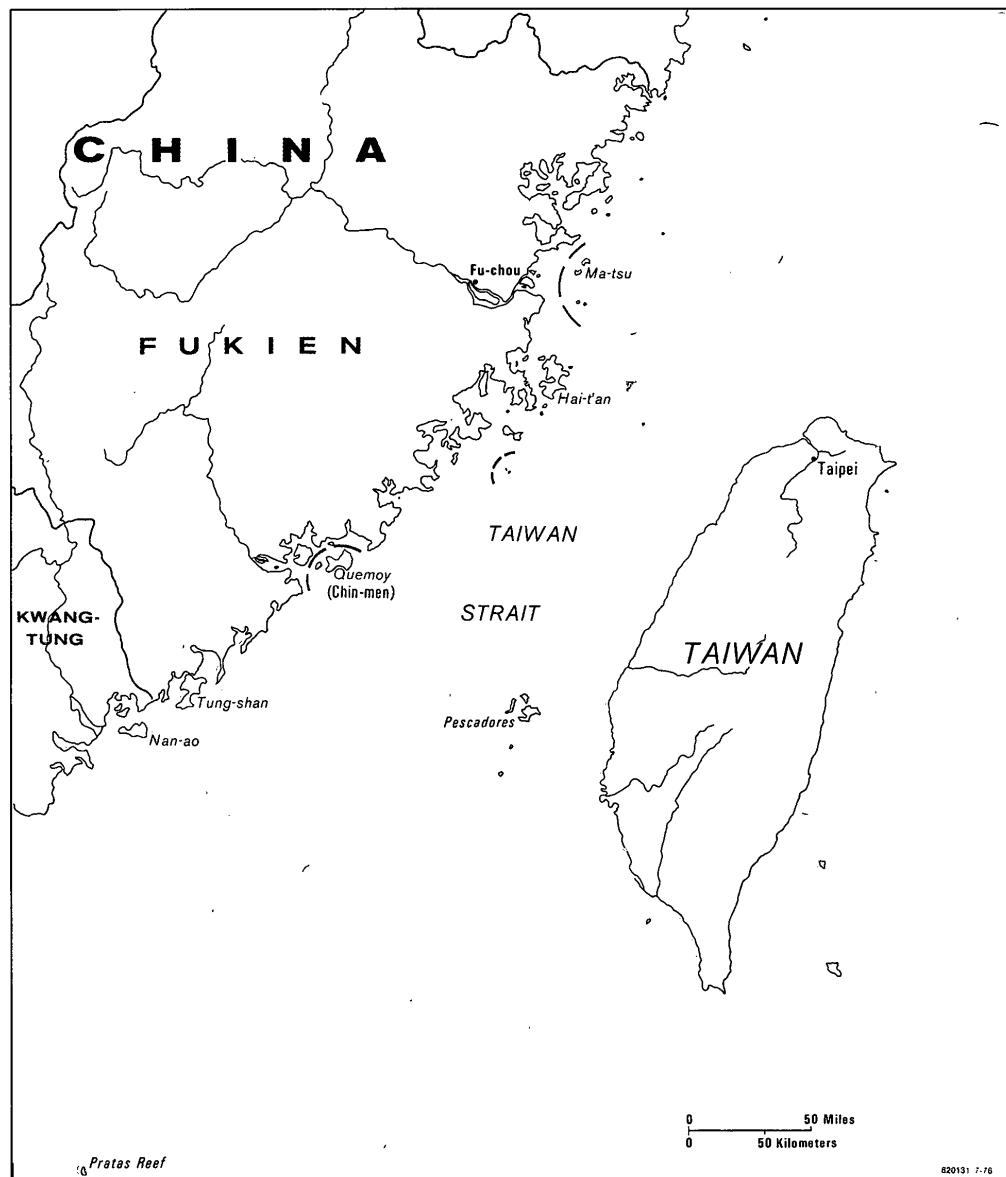
TURKEY-GREECE: Turkey remains silent about the course of the research ship *Sismik I* which departed Istanbul and entered the Sea of Marmara yesterday.

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The vessel is presumably heading for the Aegean Sea and could arrive sometime this weekend.

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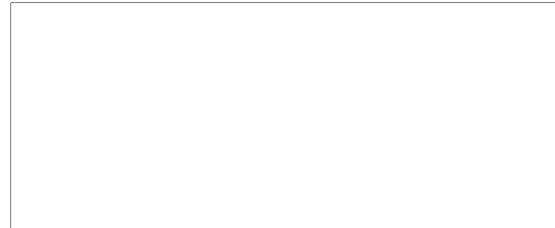
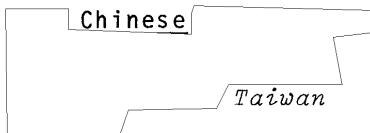
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Forces loyal to the ruling military council in Ethiopia have reasserted control over military dissidents in Eritrea Province.

The US consul in Asmara has received reports that six dissident officers were arrested this week. One of them committed suicide, and the other five are rumored to have been executed. The commanding officer of the airborne battalion, one of the army's most disaffected units, reportedly was among those arrested; the battalion apparently has been moved to a town south of Asmara.

Indicating the council's renewed confidence was the arrival in Asmara early this week of a council member with instructions to try to begin a dialogue with secessionist guerrillas.

The council also seems confident of its control of Addis Ababa. Security patrols in the city are light and generally inconspicuous. The recent executions of civilians and prominent military officers have apparently had the intended effect of intimidating potential troublemakers.

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British Defense Minister Mason has assured NATO that his government's proposed \$178-million cut in defense spending for the 1977-78 fiscal year will have little impact on the UK's military contribution to the Alliance.

In a letter to NATO Secretary General Luns, Mason said he was determined not to reduce "front line" forces committed to the Alliance--an apparent reference to the 56,000 British ground troops stationed in West Europe. He added that the spending cuts, which he described as unavoidable, would have "as small an impact as possible" on the operational capability of British armed forces. He acknowledged, however, that some unspecified weapons procurement programs may be delayed.

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